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Movie Web Project Written Report

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Media Authoring 2 – Semester 2: Dr. Brian Keegan

DIT_MADMT: Peter Dee

Date: 31 / 05 / 2005

Brief: Movie Web Project

Understanding of the Project Brief:

Submission of a written report (minimum 1500 words) about the Movie Web Project to include four headings of control of media, thematic coherence and originality, navigation and use of code.

Deadline

31 / 05 / 2005

Presentation of written assignment

Control of Media

A Flash-based website was created to promote the new movie 'Something There' by two new Irish Movie Makers, Alan Fletcher and Salvador Robinson also known as 'Al + Sal'.

External media

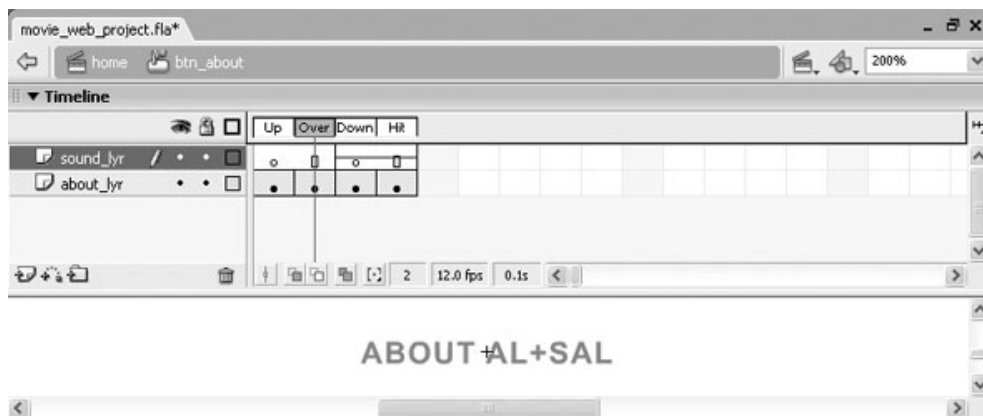
Dynamic content was used throughout the website. External text was called onto the Home page and the About page because these sections are updated on a regular basis. The Cast & Crew and Contact pages contain static text as updates here will not be as frequent. For the website to use dynamic text, a text field was created and its properties were set to 'Dynamic' and 'Multiline'. An external text file (*.txt) called 'FlashExternal.txt' was created and placed it in the same folder as the Flash (*.fla) file. ActionScript was then used to call in the external text.



To load the images dynamically into the site an empty movie clip symbol was created and named 'ExternalImage' and it was then placed on the stage for each instance into which an image would load, giving it a different instance name for each image on stage. All image content was saved as *.jpg compression file format and placed in the same folder as my Flash (*.fla) file.

Audio

The audio content for the website was recorded directly from the internet using an iRiver HD320 MP3 player. Using a USB connection, the digital sounds were downloaded to a P.C. which were then edited in Sound Forge and saved as MP3 Audio (*.mp3) for import into Flash. The buttons were enabled to create a sound when pressed by creating a new layer on the timeline of each button symbol and dragging an instance of the sound from the library onto a Hit keyframe. In the sound properties window Event was selected from the Sync pop-up menu.



A play button and a stop button were created to enable the user to control an *.mp3 audio file. Instances of 'startButton_btn' and 'stopButton_btn' were applied for the respective buttons on the stage, setting the linkage properties for the audio clip to Export for ActionScript with the identifier 'audio_clip'. ActionScript code was prepared using the .attachSound method which was then applied to the first frame of the movie scene's main timeline.

Video

Video content for the website was downloaded directly from the following URL address: <http://www.theressomethingoutthere.com> as a Quicktime movie (*.mov) which was 20MB in size. The Quicktime movie was converted to the *.flv (Flash Video) file

format using Flash's Video Import Wizard. Converting from Quicktime movie format to a *.flv video file format allowed for the video to compress down to only .78MB. To dynamically load the *.flv file an embedded video 'placeholder' (video_gnome) was created in the library and an instance (videoHolder) was placed on the stage. A button symbol (btn_movie_play) with the instance (vid_btn) was placed on the stage and actions were assigned to it to in order to load the *.flv during playback.

Thematic Coherence

Information was gathered based upon research of various movie websites and was used to develop an underlying template for the hierarchy of information on each page of the website with regard to what was important and where it would go. The look and feel of the website was developed by working with various layers using Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator. Using a 'copy and paste' technique, elements were brought in from Illustrator into Flash and converted to graphic symbols. There was a consistency in the layout of each page; the masthead at the top and the address and legal information at the bottom remain unchanged, whilst the text and image content changes in the centre panel on each page.

Fonts

A bold version of the Rockwell typeface was used to create an identity for the movie, similar to the styles used for horror movies to date. A Roman version of the Arial typeface was chosen for its clarity and legibility. Uppercase lettering for the navigation bar was used to differentiate it from the body copy. The punchy content of the red page titles were developed to stand out from the page and to suitably target the website's intended audience (18 - 35 moviegoers).

Colour

Orange and white were used as secondary colours to compliment the various shades of black and grey used throughout the six pages of the website. Colour inspiration was taken from the research which looked at how independent filmmaking websites from around the world used the predominant colours of black and red. Duotone colour values were prepared in Adobe Photoshop and were applied to the background images of each page.

Originality of approach:

Movie title

**SOMETHING
THERE**
THE GNOME IS IN YOUR HOME.

Research showed that the horror genre was applied to many low budget films. In developing the design of the website it was decided that the new Irish movie makers' website would work along a similar vein. From the outset the aim was to create something dark and exciting that would fit in with the horror genre. The title 'Something There' is suggestive and would perhaps generate an interest from those with an interest in horror movies.

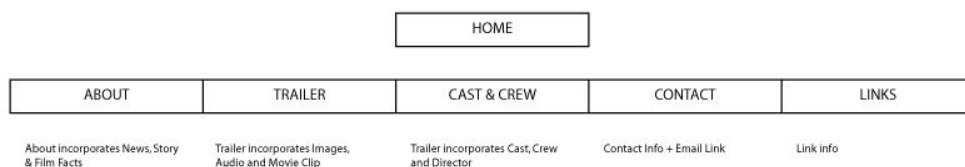
Details

The website describes in brief about how life is going along pretty well for Brad and Penny until Brad brings home a smiling garden gnome. According to legend, the gnome will protect their garden, but this gnome is different. An innocent gift turns into a murderous nightmare as the pint-sized killer takes protecting the garden to a terrifying, relentless extreme. Percieved added value was given to the movie by endorsing the site

with movie accolades and awards, images of the crew, movie reviews and links to the Arts Council and the FAS website. A brief resume was provided for Alan and Salvador and some contact information at each of the two offices was also created.

Navigation

The website is made up of six pages which include Home, About, Cast and Crew, Contact and Links. The pages of the website were created in this manner after looking at various movie websites which contained this type of information structure. The main navigation buttons, which sit neatly across the top of each page, are text based and in keeping with the overall look and feel of the website. Each relevant linking page of the site opens in the parent browser window. The five absolute links from the website open in a new browser window.



The 'Home' page contains information pertaining to the movie including a brief description, a review and details of the movie's premiere. Information about the directors and the cast and crew are contained in the 'About' and 'Cast + Crew' pages respectively. The 'Trailer' page shows a movie clip, and the 'Contact' and 'Links' pages both provide relevant contact information and links to useful resources.

Functionality

There is a hierarchy of information in my site and the content is presented according to order of importance. The movie's introductory content is presented on the first page and the absolute links are placed on the 'Links' page, positioned at the end of the navigation bar. Each page is accessed by a single mouse click and all contact addresses are presented

clearly on each page. The audio and video play control panels are designed for user friendliness.

Use of code

To stop the movie on the frame, the following piece of ActionScript was used:

```
stop();
```

To load the images dynamically into the site an empty movie clip symbol was created and ActionScript was used to create a LoadVars() object called myExternalData. The 'load' method was used to put text and image content into the object. The following is an example of the code which was placed in a frame on the main timeline

```
/* ActionScript to load external text into a Flash movie.*/
myExternalData = new LoadVars()
myExternalData.load("FlashExternal.txt")
myExternalData.onLoad = function(success){
    if(success){trace("Data has loaded successfully")}
    External_txt.text = this.home_text
    ExternalImage1.loadMovie(this.ExternalImage1)
    ExternalImage2.loadMovie(this.ExternalImage2)
    }else trace("Error loading data")
};
```

To enable the user to control an *.mp3 audio file the 'play' and 'stop' buttons were created and the following ActionScript was applied, using the .attachSound method, to the first frame of the main timeline.

```
mySound_sound = new Sound();
mySound_sound.attachSound("audio_clip");
startButton_btn.onRelease = function() {
    mySound_sound.start(0, 5);
};
stopButton_btn.onRelease = function() {
    stopAllSounds();
};
```


To dynamically load external video into the website an embedded video was created on the stage. The following piece of ActionScript was prepared so that when the user clicked the button, Flash attaches the external *.flv file to the instance of the video symbol on the stage and the video will begin to stream.

```
vid_btn.onRelease = function() {  
    myVideo_nc = new NetConnection();  
    myVideo_nc.connect(null);  
    newStream_ns = new NetStream(myVideo_nc);  
    videoHolder.attachVideo(newStream_ns);  
    newStream_ns.play("something_there.flv");  
};
```

Critique

The overall look and feel of the website works well. The logotype, images, body copy, sound effects and music work well together and are in keeping with the website's subject matter. The subtle animation brings each page to life. The type on the audio control panel can be hard to read at times and the ActionScript for the audio 'stop' button also stops the movie clip when it is pressed.



Assessment

The website has been developed to a stage where it is fully functional. It demonstrates good media control by introducing external images, text, audio and video control. Overall, the design is well considered, with a consistent look and feel throughout. The website functions well in that it is easy to navigate and to find information. The code works properly and the addition of comments would be useful.

Conclusion

It has been described how the control of media was enabled, where the inspiration for the look and feel originated, how the navigation was developed and how the ActionScript code for the website was prepared. Designing and developing this particular website was enjoyable because it was a challenge to work to a tight deadline. The website provided the opportunity to develop a greater understanding of Adobe Flash and to see how it could be utilised to develop websites that work dynamically. The next challenge is welcomed.